

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

October 11, 2005

Last week, we received a status report from the ICAN Task Force on Mentoring, with regards to the progress made on implementing a plan to provide a mentor to every child in foster care by 2010, pursuant to my motion and this Board's action last January.

Since that time, the taskforce has worked tirelessly to develop an unprecedented approach that focuses on a countywide collaboration that unifies the efforts of DCFS and community-based agencies involved in mentorship.

In my motion last January, I asked DCFS to assume a leadership role in this effort. As part of the Mentoring Taskforce, DCFS has developed a 5-year Business Plan that clearly articulates how the ambitious "2010 goal" will be met. DCFS has created a Mentoring Section that will be the tipping point of this collaborative. The Section will identify youth who would most benefit from a mentor, set up a tracking system, and help facilitate background clearances for mentors. It also will support and assist mentoring organizations and evaluate overall outcomes.

While it is clear that DCFS is committed to this collaborative mentoring effort, DCFS leadership has indicated that it does not currently have sufficient resources to fully staff

MOTION

BURKE	_____
YAROSLAVSKY	_____
KNABE	_____
ANTONOVICH	_____
MOLINA	_____

and fund this Mentoring Section. At present, the DCFS Mentoring Section has 2 full-time staff. In my view, this is not an adequate investment of resources, if this effort is to be truly successful.

I believe that engaging caring adults to become a consistent, positive force in the lives of our foster children is in perfect alignment with the Department's goals of working towards permanency for all of our foster youth. These adults - if identified, encouraged and supported properly - could very well transcend their role as mentors and become adoptive parents. National studies clearly indicate that foster youth benefit tangibly from the presence of a mentor in their lives, to support, love and encourage them, and I believe that this County should do everything possible to ensure that all of the children in our care are offered every opportunity to overcome the formidable challenges of their early lives and become successful adults in our society.

I THEREFORE MOVE:

- That the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services be instructed to work in conjunction with the Chief Administrative Office, to identify and allocate resources to fully staff a Mentoring Section, in accordance with the recommendations made by the ICAN Mentoring Taskforce.
- That the ICAN Mentoring Taskforce report back to this Board in six months, as to further progress made towards achieving the goal of a mentor for every foster youth.

###